

should. We are that close. We have two bills. It is not impossible. In fact, it is more than possible that we can achieve what we are saying with this motion to instruct today. It will just take the sincere dedication that we know we have on the House Committee on Agriculture, working with the Committee on Resources. And I know it exists with the Senate. We have always had, when it comes to agriculture, an excellent working relationship to go to conference, to work it out. That is exactly what this motion does. I hope the House will accept it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, when I was talking about dragging the chains across the desert, I did not mean that to be derogatory. That is a practice that works. In California, we cannot criticize that, because then we take the mesquite and turn it into mesquite charcoal for those oven-roasted, free-range chickens.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I took it exactly like the gentleman meant it. It was a compliment. I appreciate the support in this, because in many cases some of the folks do not agree with us on doing that either.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will provide the mesquite, we will provide the chickens.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, one of the requirements that I have had all along in this is do not muck around with my mesquite trees, whatever you do. But now we are talking about a very good, constructive use of mesquite trees. We have now got delineated, outlined clearly, how we can provide more of it, and we have a market for it, so I already see some benefits to this bill that are going to accrue to the 17th Congressional District of Texas in the new market for mesquite trees.

But here let us get back to seriousness. I hope we can do what this motion does.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the motion.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

From the Committee on Agriculture, for consideration of the House bill and

the Senate amendments, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. GOODLATTE, BOEHNER, JENKINS, GUTKNECHT, HAYES, STENHOLM, PETERSON of Minnesota and DOOLEY of California.

From the Committee on Resources, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendments, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. POMBO, MCINNIS, WALDEN of Oregon, RENZI, GEORGE MILLER of California and INSLEE.

From the Committee on the Judiciary, for consideration of sections 106 and 107 of the House bill, and sections 105, 106, 1115, and 1116 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. SENSENBRENNER, SMITH of Texas and Mr. CONYERS.

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 1829.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

FEDERAL PRISON INDUSTRIES COMPETITION IN CONTRACTING ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 428 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1829.

□ 1130

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1829) to amend title 18, United States Code, to require Federal Prison Industries to compete for its contracts minimizing its unfair competition with private sector firms and their non-inmate workers and empowering Federal agencies to get the best value for taxpayers' dollars, to provide a 5-year period during which Federal Prison Industries adjusts to obtaining inmate work opportunities through other than its mandatory source status, to enhance inmate access to remedial and vocational opportunities and other rehabilitative opportunities to better prepare inmates for a successful return to society, to authorize alternative inmate work opportunities in support of non-profit organizations, and for other purposes, with Mr. SHAW in the Chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and

the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, Federal Prison Industries, or FPI for short, was first authorized in the 1930s to require Federal agencies to buy goods made by inmates in Federal prisons. The purpose of FPI was to ensure work and training for prison inmates by guaranteeing a market for prison-made goods. Although Federal Prison Industries may have started with good intentions, it has been surrounded by controversy since its inception.

FPI enjoys a mandatory market for its goods, a government facility to produce them in, and pays its workers less than the minimum wage to manufacture them. A guaranteed market for its products and reduced costs for labor and capital clearly amounts to an unfair advantage when put in direct competition with private industries. As Members of Congress, I believe it is our duty to protect the pocketbooks of taxpayers by ensuring that the Federal Government is not misusing taxpayer dollars. I believe it is also our duty to protect American business and workers from unfair competition by the Federal Government.

FPI is a large, government-owned corporation. It currently operates 111 factories at 71 of its correctional institutions where it produces goods in over 150 product lines under the trade name UNICOR. It offers approximately 150 broad classes of products and services through eight business groups. And there is no question FPI hurts private industry. For example, in fiscal year 2002, the FPI sold over \$210 million in office furniture, representing a 17.2 share of the office furniture market nationwide.

Since I was first elected to Congress, I have been working to correct the situation with FPI and level the playing field for private industry. I became interested in this issue out of concern for small businesses in my district in Wisconsin. Two businesses in my district were shut down as a direct result of competition from FPI. Other businesses sought my help when FPI threatened to come in and begin manufacturing small engines. Over the years, I have received dozens of letters complaining about FPI and asking Congress to eliminate mandatory source in favor of a more competitive market for Federal agency business. Because of these concerns, it is not surprising that industry and labor have joined Members of this body in seeking reform of Federal Prison Industries.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1829, the Federal Prison Industries Competition and Contracting Act of 2003, is a bipartisan solution to reform prison industries. This legislation would alter the way FPI does business by requiring that FPI compete for its business opportunities. Currently, all Federal agencies